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Resources new to the HSRG, links to events and programs, and other useful information.

The HSRG from the CSS Perspective

A few weeks ago, we had the opportunity to sit with four Coordinated Services Specialists (CSS) and observe how they integrate the HSRG in their work with clients. These four women – Julie Endersbee, Marylou Neal, Yolanda Nicholson, and Ro Pauline – shared their tips and tricks, the challenges, and the benefits of having the HSRG as a comprehensive resource.

With Julie and Marylou, we were able to observe several client calls and watch as they consulted the HSRG, in conjunction with other resources such as a Google search, to assist callers. This opportunity was important because although we spend much of our day working in the database,



our use and experience is much different than what we observed. For example, ease of information retrieval is vital for CSS workers to meet the needs of clients who are often in crisis. In this intense environment, we learned that every click counts.

With Yolanda and Ro, we explored the database and its functions and heard their suggestions for upgrades to improve user-friendliness and functionality. For example, the ZIP Code filter is too narrow and returns few service records, so it's used infrequently. A proximity function would be a solution to this obstacle, allowing a user to search an area 1, 3, or 5 miles around a ZIP Code, yielding more helpful results.

Observing CSP staff at work and learning about their experiences in person was valuable to our understanding of CSS utilization of the database. We learned that they value the HSRG and would be severely hampered in providing information to clients without it. ♦

Outreach to Other HS Agencies

Spreading awareness of the HSRG to our colleagues beyond NCS is an important part of the mission of Information Resources. Recently we presented orientations to several units in both DFS and CSB, and a large audience of HCD staff from multiple units, with more sessions to come.

Many of the staff in other agencies know of the HSRG and use the database in their work regularly, but many more rely on Google searches, their various "cheat sheets" and other resources. To many who are unaware of the existence of the HSRG, it is welcomed as a valuable tool. One CSB supervisor called the database "an invaluable resource that will be of great help" to his staff.

In addition to sharing a valuable resource with colleagues, these sessions give us insight as to how staff in other agencies approach their work and the types of services to which they refer their clients. This will be helpful in identifying new resources to add to the database in the future. ♦



HSRG 2014 Survey

It had been almost five years and one redesign since CSS attitudes toward the HSRG had been measured, so October seemed like a good time to issue a new survey. The results this year again were positive, with a 71% response rate.

Here are some highlights:

- 83% use the database on a daily basis
- 62% said the database is extremely or very effective; 31% said it is moderately effective
- 100% of respondents said their work would be negatively impacted if the HSRG was not available

The most frequently referred services are Emergency Needs, with food referrals at the top of the list. Clothing, medical and transportation referrals follow closely.

In answer to questions about potential upgrades to the HSRG, the most requested addition was a true keyword search function, followed by the ability to save as a list the resources referred to clients.

Overall, the responses were positive, with comments ranging from “it’s getting better” to the “HSRG is very helpful and I use it daily.” ♦

Briefly ...

- ❖ **Major Changes to CSB Listings** – Nearly 100 [CSB listings](#) were reduced to eight (plus Infant and Toddler Connection) as the agency moves to a centralized E&R model of service.
- ❖ **Southgate Mobile Marketplace Now Open Year-round** – An open-air [farmer’s market](#) held on the 4th Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to noon at the Southgate Community Center located at 12125 Pinecrest Road in Reston. This is a service of Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) to provide low-income residents in Reston with access to seasonal fresh produce free of charge.
- ❖ **Employment Opportunities** – [Skillsource in Reston](#) is holding several hiring events in November. Have clients call 703-787-4974 to register. All sessions start promptly at 10 a.m.
 - Nov 10 – Apex CoVantage: Installers and Electricians. Benefits after 12 months of employment.
 - Nov 12 – Home Instead Senior Care: Caregivers. Competitive wages, paid training, filling 75 positions.
 - Nov 20 – Various employers located at Dulles Airport. Retail and food service positions, full-time and part-time.
 - Nov 24 – Gate Gourmet at Dulles Airport. Food service positions include benefits.
 - In addition to these employment opportunities, all county [Skillsource Centers](#) have a complete calendar of resume and interview assistance, [WIA for Youth](#), SNAP ET, and other programs and services for [job seekers](#).
- ❖ **World of Possibilities Expo** – [disAbilities, Healthy Aging, and Independent Living Expo](#), the largest event of its kind in the region, will be held November 15 at the Tysons Corner Marriott. Entry fee of \$3.
- ❖ **DFS Seminars for Family Caregivers** – Clients calling for services for seniors or family members with disabilities may be interested in the series of free seminars for family caregivers offered by DFS. These seminars are designed to help family caregivers of older adults and adults with a disability manage day to




day caregiving challenges. Register [online](#), email Caregiver@fairfaxcounty.gov, or call 703-324-5205, TTY 711.

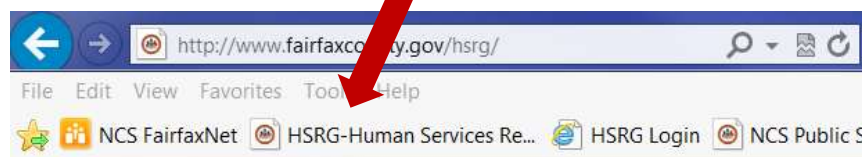
- **Finding Your Voice: Navigating the Modern Medical Maze**
Thursday, November 6 – 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly, VA 20151
- **Dementia Research Update**
Monday, November 10 – 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Insight Memory Care Center, 2812 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031
- **Technology and Design for Independent Living**
Wednesday, November 19 – 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Thomas Jefferson Library, 7415 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church, VA 22042

- ❖ **Welcome Home Program** – A new program from [Housing and Community Services of Northern Virginia, Inc.](#) (HCSNV) to assist 12 low income families who are at risk of losing their homes. HCSNV case managers will work with the families to improve their personal and financial stability through a 12-month period of support. Eligibility requirements apply. If you have clients who would benefit from this program, please call 703-372-5440 or contact [Vivian Boakye](#) for more information.



HCSNV also compiles an extensive listing of [low income housing opportunities](#) available throughout northern Virginia. This resource is gathered from media and online notices and is published weekly.

- ❖ **Fairfax County Housing Challenge** – In July, [FACETS](#) and five other nonprofits came together in a year-long challenge to find homes for homeless people and those in unstable housing via rapid rehousing. Each quarter, the group sets higher goals as part of the challenge. First quarter goals were surpassed with 127 single adults and 70 families placed in permanent housing. Members of the local Fairfax challenge include FACETS, Cornerstones, Good Shepherd Housing, New Hope Housing, Shelter House and Volunteers of America Chesapeake. (#ffxhousingchallenge)
- ❖ **Hypothermia Prevention** – The program began on November 1, and includes a “no turn-away” policy during periods of freezing temperatures. [County prevention page](#). List of [shelters](#). [Debbie Scaggs](#) is the county Hypothermia Prevention Manager.
- ❖ **CHO Reopens Clothes Closet** – The [Clothes Closet](#) reopened in September and hours are 9:30 am to noon on Mondays (but not the first Monday of the month) during the school year. The Clothes Closet is located at 133 Park St. NE in Vienna and is fully accessible by public transportation. They welcome donations.
- ❖ **Save the HSRG as a Favorite!** – Browse to the HSRG main page and click on the  (in the upper left corner) to save the HSRG on your favorites bar at the top of your screen. Now you have instant one-click access to thousands of programs and services.



HSRG Orientation

We offer a short, one-hour orientation to the HSRG to anyone who is interested in learning more about this valuable tool. We can attend your staff meeting and present a training that includes familiarization with all the search and retrieval functions and helpful hints for effective use of the HSRG. Please call or [email](#) to schedule a training.



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